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PLUCKING THE TURKEY
By Enrique Simonet

—Courtesy Art Institute, Chicago



PREPARING THE OFFERING
By Valentin de Zubiaurre

—Courtesy Art Institute, Chicago



THE PEAKS OF THE GUADARRAMAS.
By Jaime Morera

—Courtesy Art Institute, Chicago

Contemporary Spanish Artists

By James William Pattison

LARGE pictures are very impressive, more so if the objects represented are also large. By "large" we mean canvases eleven or twelve feet long and wide in proportion, as Mezquita's picture called "My Friends," in which there stand nine life-size men in a line each as close to the other as people can conveniently stand, and these nine men occupy the canvas from side to side. Of course this size permits the painting of everything in sight, and each figure is a distinct individual, nothing omitted of its realism. All these Spaniards are painting large things in a large way. Even the smaller canvasses generally show life size forms and the finish is so complete that nothing could surpass the realism. It will be the purpose of this writing to make plain, if possible, the difference between this literalism and other which we have known for many years.

There is a strange sentiment in this work though never sentimentalism. The personages are very largely painted in the open air, but the result obtained is not at all what has been known as outdoor effect, and herein lies the mystery of the unexpected. It cannot be said that these are absolutely original, because effects very much like them have been secured by secessionist painters in Germany. However, the Germans are not the Spaniards and everything in these pictures is exceedingly Spanish. In out-of-doors pictures we expect to discover the effects of diffused light or the effects of sunlight, which are elements rarely found in these pictures. They represent no daylight as we have been accustomed to consider the out-door effects. In the first place

we find no glimmer of light, we find no melting of one form into the other—of the sort which suggests poetical sentiment, such as we find in the landscapes of George Inness or William Keith. Every object is painted for its own sake and could be taken away from the others and stand alone, whether it be a head, a loaf of bread or a porcelain jar. There is no enveloping atmosphere to make one object dependent upon the other. If you are disposed to cry out, "how ugly they must be!" the reply comes quite naturally, "Indeed they are ugly but so extraordinarily well done as to awaken our enthusiasm in spite of ourselves." Spanish people are dark skinned. If they be peasants, accustomed to working in the open air under a hot sun, their tanned skins become so dark that two spots glimmer out of the face where the eyes are, not unlike what we see with the negroes. Also

these painters delight in painting characterful expressions, and they think they find them in hard worked and much exposed men and women. These are rendered with such faithfulness and attention to detail that we are obliged to admire. There are two brothers, Zubiaurre, the elder Valentin de, and a younger one Ramon de, born thirty odd years ago, now living in Madrid. These two paint very much alike and their work, which ought to be called very bad, is wonderfully good of its kind. The elder's picture, "Doña Mamerta and her niece," is an exceedingly modest sized canvas, on



NINON AND LEONELLA
By Anselmo Miguel Nieto

—Courtesy, Art Institute, Chicago

which are two life size heads and parts of figures so crowded that the tops of the heads and the elbows are cut off by the frame. The landscape setting is so dark that the excessively sun burned faces are not strongly relieved. The younger carries an open fan against her very dark dress, which is the one brilliant thing on the canvas, in fact, it is so extraordinarily well made as to be overdone. However, this remark can be applied to almost every one of the pictures in this manner; and there is much of it in evidence. Over in the limited background is a pale gray house as

sharp and hard and uncompromising and lacking in atmosphere as possible, and yet remarkably well done. These two women sit bolt upright looking straight at you and don't seem to be doing or thinking anything. Then it escapes being ugly because of the wonderful texture and the exceeding truth in each object. The principal point to be left in mind is the dark skin against the dark landscape. This same painter has a large canvas called "Preparing the Offering." It seems that the offering is a bride. She stands bolt upright in the middle of the canvas holding in each hand a candle, not lighted. The candle and its holder are decorated with frills of blue and white tissue paper. She is fairly good-looking and arrayed in the completest of peasant costumes; dark goods much embroidered. Besides her is an old body with skin as wrinkled and leathery as the bride is smooth and fair. The old

body's grey hair is brushed tight to her scalp and tied into a little pug at the back. She is stooping and adjusting some part of the girl's costume, which brings her weather-beaten face in contrast to the gay green skirt of the bride. Standing about are excellent full length figures, relatives evidently, who are doing absolutely nothing but looking into vacancy. As in almost every picture by these two brothers there is a wonderful loaf of bread on the table, and sundry melons, and wonderfully polished blue and white porcelain pitchers. In fact if all the bread and fruit and blue and white porcelain were gathered in these pictures, quite a family could go to house-



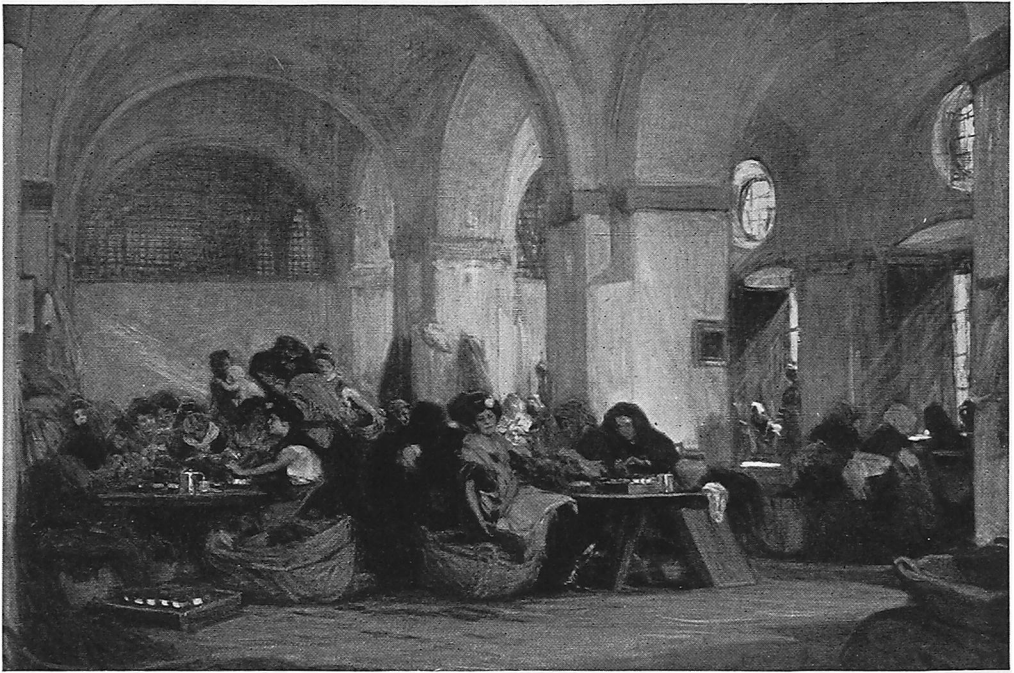
THE SIBYL OF THE ALPUJARRAS

By Julio Romero de Torres

—Courtesy Art Institute, Chicago

keeping, not lacking food or fixtures.

Each one of the pictures by these two brothers deserves careful study. Though they are in certain respects alike there is no lack of individuality in each one. Another large canvas called "The Tyrant of the District," is one of the best. There are three women and a man all of one size and standing in a row nearly equally spaced. This should make stupid composition, and we suspect that it does, but the figures and faces are so well done that we scarcely dare criticize. Presumably a fair woman selling fish is the tyrant. She, indeed, looks it. Her very autocratic face is so strongly modeled, so wonderfully true in all its de-



WORKROOM OF THE TOBACCO FACTORY AT SEVILLE
By Gonzalo Bilbao y Martinez

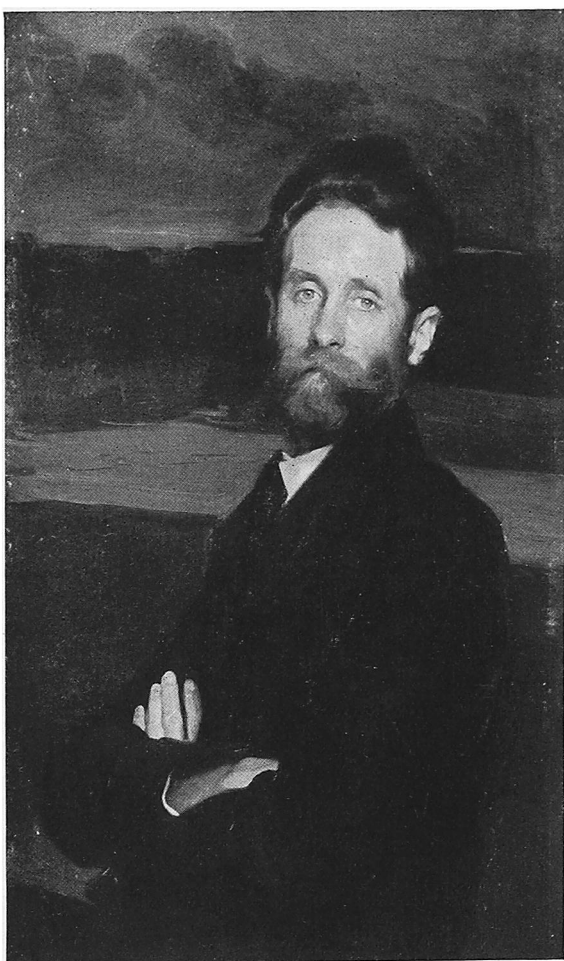
—Courtesy Art Institute, Chicago

tails, so finished though not polished, that, while we do not fall in love with the woman, we do with the painter. Four women occupy nearly the height of the canvas, so much so that the jar which each carries on her head, whatever they may contain, occupies the space from the heads quite out of the top of the picture, certainly an exceedingly odd composition. The four are dressed in dark clothes and they form easily a part of the low toned landscape. These figures are walking about on a high paved terrace, from which we look down on a greenish sea, masses of very solid rolling clouds and a compactly built village with pale houses. The buildings in these pictures seem to keep their places very well, although they are sharp and hard and as absolute as the stones that they are built on. They never sit in the atmosphere and still they keep in the perspective. They are mostly in pale colors and form an important spot in the composition. Here again we have this wonderfully painted still

life, an astonishing basket of shiny fish, placed on the pavement, without reference to the composition. Close down to the frame in the right hand corner is a large shiny white and blue pitcher with two wonderful green apples beside it, but the real feature in this picture is the painting of the knotty faces. In all these faces, and nearly all the faces of the exhibition, there is a frankly stated lack of light and shade. While the heads model perfectly and every varying tint is beautifully rendered, they have no light side nor no dark side; they sit in diffused light which creeps into every crevice; as the shiny porcelain is a simple note without light and shade so the faces are simple still life.

Again come very similar picture by the younger of the two brothers. The largest of these, containing what seem to be life-size figures, is called "The Authorities of My Home Village." These officers are certainly not aristocrats, though they think so well of themselves. Seated around a

table with white cloth are four of these men who have been lunching. This white tablecloth appears in many of these series of pictures, though it is by no means painted with white, but rather with a strange bluish grey. Two of these officials are in stove-pipe hats, grown in the back country many many years ago,, and excessively tall and flaring. The other two are in flat caps. The rural character of these people is indicated by the unbuttoned vests and white shirt sleeves, which shine out amid the general darkness of cloth. One of the principal men is seated at the table in such a manner that his lofty hat is drawn almost exactly on the luminous shirt front of the man behind him. This certainly does not count for good composition, because the striking contrast leads the eye off to the edge of the canvas. The girl in deep red petticoat, so short as to show her white wool stockings carries out the group. The figures have absolutely no connection with each other but simply sit and stare before them. The usual group of buildings balances the composition and each one is unusually hard. The whole affair is backed up by a range of indigo mountains. Here again we have a quantity of blue and white porcelain, excessively hard and shiny, and an abundance of fruit on the ground, as well as a marvelous round loaf of bread. All these things are in the grass, except a loaf in the hands of the last man coming to lunch, and he holds against his chest the half of a big round loaf from which he is cutting a slice. I think I have never seen a piece of still life painting quite as real as this fresh-cut loaf. The white bread and the brown crust are so literal in texture as to be absolutely marvelous. Although the figures are so sober in color and low in tone these pieces of still life enliven it materially. One man has in his hands a heavy book



PORTRAIT

—Courtesy Art Institute, Chicago
By Fernando Alvarez de Sotomayor

bound in orange parchment covers, and the man beside it is so red and sunburned that we wonder that there can be people so scorched as that. It must not be forgotten that in every one of these pictures the people are scarcely doing anything. While intelligent looking they don't seem to have an idea in their heads.

There is still another large picture of similar character by Eduardo Chicharro called "Feast Day of the Village." The figures are large and important enough to allow the artist every opportunity for painting of incident. The figures are on the pavement of a plaza surrounded by



CAROLINITA

By José María López Mezquita

—Courtesy Art Institute, Chicago

Spanish houses in many colors, and in the background, where the afternoon sun strikes, bringing out a series of yellow orange and red buildings, as intensely sharp cut and severely lined as it is possible to imagine, and very gay in color. The good earth color of the soil sustains nicely all this and brings out the large foreground figures with the greatest distinctness, and it must be remembered that these figures are all life size. A woman and three children occupy the one side, and opposite to them is a woman selling cakes and candies, and beside her a man, in a very deep blue, who appears to be taking a

gay green purse from his pocket. The sales-woman stands with too much stolidity to sell anything, unless the man is intent on buying. She is dressed in a clear dark blue with the reddest shawl over her shoulders that pure vermillion can represent. It is a remarkably interesting group, and the well painted faces are done with as much truth, as are the well painted candies and cakes. The children are in gay clothes, and one of them, who has plumped herself down on the ground, so that her stiff petticoat spreads around her like a big Dutch cheese, is holding a pet guinea pig. The face is admirably done, evidently an excellent likeness, but staring out as expressionless as the guinea pig she holds. Her dress is in wide portions of bright red, gay yellow, maroon and metallic green. About her shoulders is a brilliant red shawl. The mother of these children is also in an embroidered low toned red. The most striking feature in the whole business

is that all these people have not a single thought in their heads and they are seriously occupied looking out of their eyes and seeing nothing. Everything is as hard and sharp as carpenter work, and it should be a fearfully bad picture, but for some reason it is not. In fact it is most delightfully interesting.

Enrique Simonet, of Madrid, shows us a large canvas with three life size women sitting in a sun spotted courtyard, amid flowering shrubs, two of them plucking white geese and the third plucking a dark colored turkey. This is a totally different art from what we have been describing,

probably the most popular picture in the entire collection. There are two reasons for this: the prettiness of the women and the adjuncts, and the easily understood subject. In fact the picture is altogether too easily comprehended. With all its charming qualities it is, as art, excessively vulgar, and this severe condemnation is called out by the fact that it is nothing more or less than the exact presentation of few picturesque objects, in a style that we have grown tired of these many, many years, and so manifestly an old story that even its good workmanship cannot save it. I suspect that the majority of gallery visitors will be surprised at this sharp remark. But what can possibly be more tiresome than to see the mill turning out that same old pretty grist, that we admired for a short time at nineteen years of age. It certainly is charmingly painted but very much lacking in atmosphere and entirely unsympathetic.

It seems that there is an old tradition, which demands that the place of honor, at a wedding breakfast, shall be occupied by a fine turkey, and these are preparing the feast. The clothing of white skirt, maroon overskirt and crimson scarf over against the blue of the turkey woman's dress, and the gay red kerchief she wears, do not work well in this pale picture. The background is the white wall and all about this courtyard are flowering shrubs, as pretty as the pretty women: pretty, pretty, pretty; dear! dear! dear!—so pretty!

Hanging directly beside it is a study of light by the daughter of our friend Sorolla. She has already made for herself a very material reputation as a painter.

Though the picture is not large the single seated figure occupies most of the space within the frame. This is an old fellow, all dressed in white. He sits in a garden with slightly reddish earth and over his head a lemon tree. Through this tree and down on the earth the sun blazes superbly, throwing an extensive flecking of purple shadows. In the midst of this the old fellow is seated, looking straight out before him, balanced by his two feet, his expansive trousers, being strained at the knees by his sitting position, show extensively, his naked ankles. On his head he wears a sort of yellowish handkerchief. All that might sound very commonplace, but his face is strongly reflected by the light from the neighboring soil; so much so that at first glance we see no face at all, but after a moment it appears. There in completeness, nothing neglected. To have seen all



CASTILIAN PEASANT
By Eduardo Chicharro

—Courtesy Art Institute, Chicago



THE BAY OF MALAGA
By Antonio Muñoz Degraín

—Courtesy Art Institute, Chicago

this, and to have painted all these simple colors in shadow, against brilliant sunshine, shows a talent in this young woman which nothing, that her father ever has done, can surpass.

In this same connection we turn to a picture by Sorolla, the father, with whose work we are so familiar. The canvas is by no means small and it is called "Marie Convalescent," this being the daughter, Maria, whose picture we have just considered. This girl, recovering from her recent illness, is a number of years younger than the woman painter, which she now is. This was painted previous to her father's bursting out into gay coloring. We all know that his pictures of some years ago were cool and gray as this one is. The invalid sits propped up against many white pillows, and covered by a great yellowish fur lap robe. The enormous fur collar of her coat is turned up about her ears, under a flat cap. She is in a very airy mountain perch, from whence she can look down upon a dashing river and its hilly banks, leading back to a rugged mountain range, painted so close to the top of the frame that a mere hint of sky is visible.

The entire landscape is flooded with light, but one half the pile of white pillows is in pearly shadow, the other half in sunlight. Somewhat bewildered, about this mass of white and shadow about the head, we search for the cause and discover directly over her head a little triangle of tent cloth which indicates the canopy which casts a shadow on the pillows. This picture has displeased many Americans whose memories are filled with the brilliant effects of Sorolla the gorgeous, but it is exquisitely tender, sympathetic and true. In fact it is a striking example of all Sorolla's painting a very few years ago. Its color is that of the pathetic picture of the girl in the third class carriage, a woman prisoner and two police guards; which, if I mistake not, is the property of the City Art Museum of St. Louis.

The other picture, by the Spanish artist whom we most know, Ignacio Zuloaga, is all that we should expect. Its title "The Hermit," explains well the picture, and the artist's reputation, for keen insight and wonderful rendering of character, is born out in the life size figure. This old man with his gray hair and face in shadow

stands on the mountain top, his hat and a rude crucifix in his right hand, and a human skull beside a blue and white porcelain dish on a rock. His left hand is extended and holding a book. Against a very quiet sky, flushed a little with color, his white shirt works very simply, and about his waist is a dull red scarf. There is nowhere in the picture such a series of brilliantly colored garments as have been many times seen, but a dignified gravity and thoughtfulness carries much weight with the imagination. Of somewhat the same character but less important is the life sized figure called "Castilian Peasant," by Eduardo Chicharro, a figure wrapped from head to foot in a dark cloak with black slouch hat and an excessively sun-burned face. Everything in the picture is low in tone, and the face has no lighted side, no shaded side, but a wonderfully developed modeling of muscles and wrinkles, and an expression of dignified self complacency. Occupying the other half of this large canvas stands, on end, a hewn-out plow of village workmanship. We are greatly impressed by the ingenuity of the rude carpenter who made it, and the surface of the shaved wood is most marvelously rendered, proving again the extraordinary ability of these men in still life painting.

The picture of head and shoulders, of a woman dressed in simple garment embroidered about the open throat, very black hair, and sufficiently dark in complexion to make the whites of the eyes shine forth as individual spots, is "The Sibyl of the Alpujarras" by De Torres. This is an example of the treatment used by many Spanish artists; there is almost no light and shade in the face, but beautiful, simple modeling. Another of the same sort is "Ninon and Leonella" by Nieto, two full-length figures standing in a low-toned landscape, with rose tints in the clouds, one dressed in black the other in very deep wine color, and the scarf has dull green

and red. Here again the figures are treated with the utmost simplicity and unity. These pictures resemble greatly Italian work of the opening years of the sixteenth century, reminding us of Filippo Lippi. There is a remarkable simplicity and finish in this work.

Coming down to the simple normal painting of portraits, such as our artists of today practice, the large canvas called "My Friends," by Mezquita, is distinctly original in subject and admirably executed. I have already alluded to this, and to the nine men standing in a row, from side to side in the canvas. The plain wall behind these figures is slightly broken by such simple things as artists gather about them. In the second plan the face of the artist is seen peering over the shoulders of the principal group. The idea is a very odd one. These nine men are all standing close together and seem to have dropped in to visit, as each of them wears, or carries, an overcoat and they all wear hats. Most conspicuous among them is a tall lean man all in black and wearing an excessively high and broadrimmed black felt hat. He appears to have dark hair and a dark moustache and his face is somewhat concealed by an enormous white beard. Exactly balancing this figure is one of a priest in the black hat and clothes of his profession, and he is an exceedingly interesting individual. So they stand here looking out at us, each one a distinct individual. The extent of black clothes is relieved by a figure in brown and he has about as cunning a face as can be imagined. In fact, it is a superb portrait group, not at all Spanish, excepting that the characters are undoubtedly Spaniards.

Turning aside a little we might consider somewhat the landscapes, although they are not numerous nor particularly well done, excepting the strange spot called "Tajalausea," by Ferrandiz. It is a canvas of twelve feet in length, and represents a wonderful upheaval of mountains, rocks in

simple gray facade. We can discover many rents in this facade of rocks, one of which seems to have cleft the enormous ledge with a narrow slit from top to bottom. The tops of these gigantic rocks are lighted with brilliant sunset colors, and the same illumination extends to other mountains beyond. It must be remembered that this is a stupendous precipice and that it encloses some valleys beyond which are not visible but may be imagined, and from behind the rocks comes forward a little river, expanding along the lowland of the immediate foreground. This lowland is still pretty rocky and irregular, softened by much greensward, and the ruggedness is veiled by a great many blossoming shrubs. On the bluff at the left stands a public building, probably a monastery. The contrast which this little verdant valley makes with the intensely severe upheaval of rock, gives us a most striking landscape unlike anything else, and the painting is clear and brilliant. But there are pictures here which recall the painting of Munich, a generation ago. "The Forge," by Munoz Degrain, shows us a hovel of a blacksmith's shop, where blacksmiths are working amid a confusion of tools and some people. An open door beyond gleams in the sunshine, where we see another figure. There is nothing remarkable about it excepting much admirably painted detail. The objection to it is its old fashioned style and no attention whatever to those large simplicities marking most of the work in the exhibition. Much of the same sort is "The Bay of Malaga," by the same artist—a moonlight picture with very broken clouds, in which the moon plays, and these forms are reflected in the still water of the bay. The tide is out, and has left on the beach a number of boats, around which many men are working, hastening to finish before the water comes back. A bonfire on the beach makes a brilliant point of light and many lamps are sparkling about the boats. This, like the other, is exceedingly well painted, almost

rudely brushed and full of vitality, but lacking breadth and simplicity. It is an example of an old and once popular style of painting.

Another of the same sort, but much better done, also a large picture, represents a bull fight in a village bull pit. It is entitled "The Cape," by Jose Garnelo. The picture is simply a well painted landscape. On the slope of a near hill are a tower and other buildings. The entire lower half of the canvas is occupied by a multitude of people, standing about a pit, or dangling their legs from the top of the wall. Down in the pit two men contend with the bull, one of them holding a red cloak in the act of blinding the creature by throwing it over his head, but the real picture is the multitude of spectators, all in gay costumes and eagerly watching the exciting sport. Probably this is one of the most popular pictures in the exhibition, which is exceedingly natural, because the story is interesting, well executed and showing every kind of color on the palette. While in no sense great art it is a very sympathetic art.

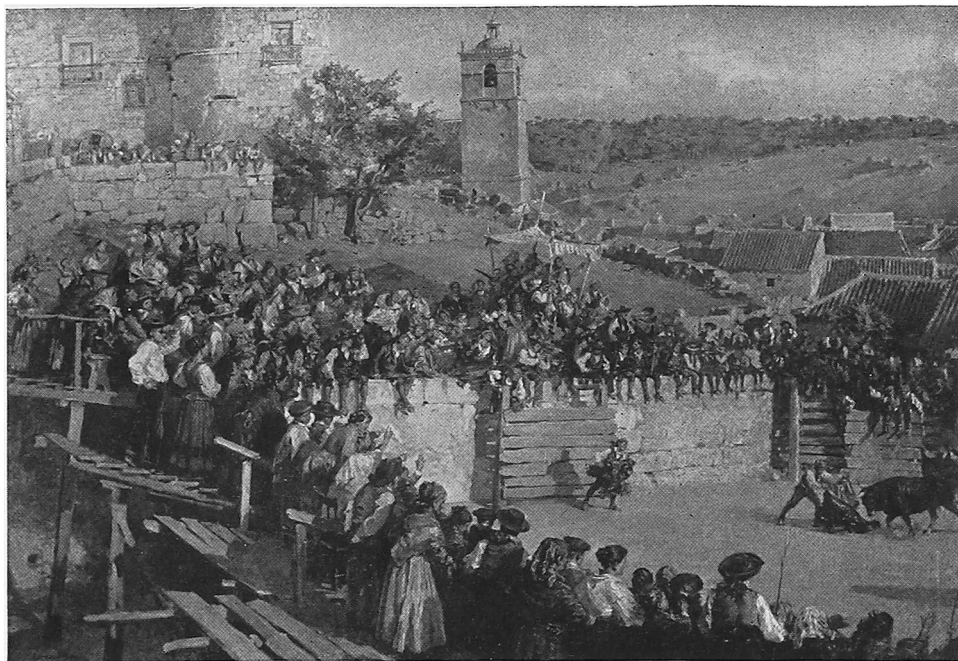
Jaime Morera has studied a frosty mountain top, carefully drawn masses of rugged rock pushing their heads up through the snow. It is done with great simplicity and imbued with a sort of sentiment. There is another by the same artist, the same sort of scene. It is exceedingly good work, though in no way particularly original. The same thing may be said of Bilbao's "Workroom of the Tobacco Factory at Seville." The enormous vaulted interior is made very luminous by reflected sunlight. Of course the old walls are rich in tone and there is a certain ripeness in the color. Gathered about the tables on the floor there is a swarm of women in gay clothes in many attitudes. As individuals these are not carefully studied, but as a crowd of people the effect is excellent.

The single head called "Portrait," by De Sotomayor, is quite ideal as treatment. Again we have an almost shadowless face,



MARIA CONVALESCENT
By Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida

—Courtesy Art Institute, Chicago



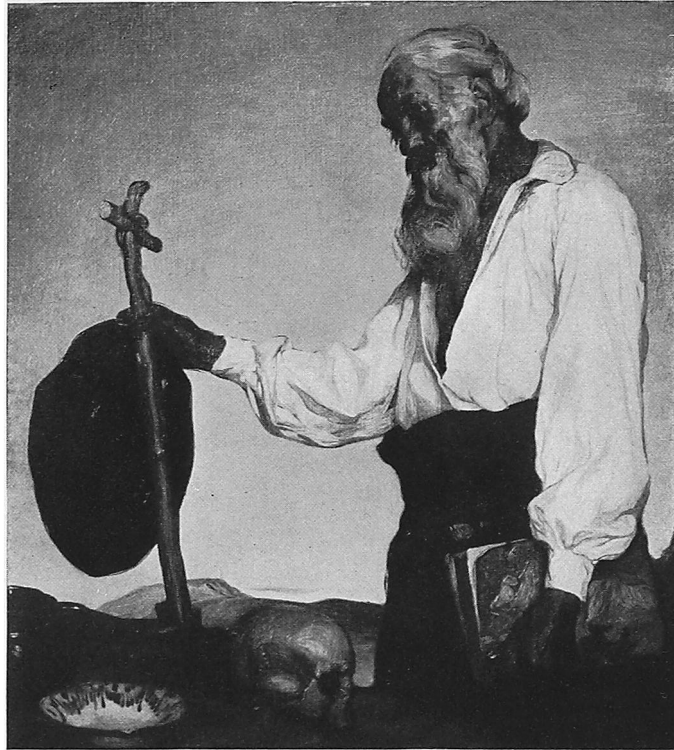
THE CAPE
By José Garnelo y Alda

—Courtesy Art Institute, Chicago

its modulations brought out with very limited margins. The dark background suggests a landscape, just as many painters today use landscape simple as background. The full length of little "Carolinita," by Mezquita, reminds one very much of our contemporaneous portrait painters in all European countries. The dark brown hair and tanned complexion throw out the whites of the eyes and are maintained by the lowtoned white dress. A dull green scarf is contrasted with bright red spots, which look to be mammoth cherries, and she has red shoes. All of this suggests that

the present tendencies in portrait painting are very much alike all over Europe and America.

Finally, the most impressive things in this exhibition are those pictures of peasants in their embroidered costumes, with their friends grouped about, in seemingly arbitrary manner and strewn about, in the grass or on tables, the wonderfully painted pottery and fruits, each article standing for itself without much relation to the people about, and most interesting, because so well done and so very Spanish.



THE HERMIT
By Ignacio Zuloaga

—Courtesy Art Institute, Chicago